

Approved August 17, 2016

MINUTES
Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
June 15, 2016

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
The Franklin Hotel, Chapel Hill, NC

Board Members Present: Jeffrey Strickler, George Cianciolo, Rosemary Waldorf-Chair, Karen DeHart, Aaron Bachenheimer, Lee Pavao-Vice Chair, Penny Rich, Shannan Campbell, Andrew Strickland, Nitin Khanna, Meg McGurk, Jill McCullough

Not Present: Tim Hoke, Mark Sherburne, Allison Nichols-Clapper, Michelle Johnson, Mark Bell, Annette Stone, Lee Storrow

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers

Also present: Sarah DeGennaro, Executive Director and Michael Verville, Program Coordinator both of The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, Jessica Hurst, Sr. Account Manager and Tim McCraley of Simpleview

Call to Order

Chair Rosemary Waldorf called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Waldorf requested a motion to approve the May 18, 2016 minutes. Lee Pavao so moved, Aaron Bachenheimer seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Finance Report

Penny Rich, Finance Chair, reported that she and the other County Commissioners are in the process of passing the 2016-17 Annual Operating Budget and CIP. They will meet on June 16 to make sure everything they want is covered in the budget; this discussion will focus mainly on Schools and Outside Agency requests. She share that we are happy to have an increase in the Visitors Bureau budget of \$25,000 and thanks George Cianciolo for his efforts on the Bureaus behalf. The Commissioners have asked Laurie Paolicelli to open up possible funding discussions with Carrboro and Hillsborough, as they do not contribute to the Bureaus budget at this time. We will continue to fund the Orange County Arts Council which will be under new leadership with the retirement of Martha Shannon. The Commissioners believe there may be some repetition of services by Arts Councils in the County and are going to look at that. The Hillsborough Arts Council has asked the county for funding, if awarded it will not come from the Visitors Bureau budget. Ms. Rich stated that the Visitors Bureau budget is \$1.4 million for 2017. The county has purchase additional land, 37 acres, for soccer fields next to those that already exist in Efland. The Commissioners would like to see more hotels built in this part of the county to accommodate people who come for tournaments. Ms. Rich informed the board that the Visitors Bureau has not been covering the full amount of their indirect costs over the last several years. This year the County Manager has proposed that the full amount of \$102,888 be paid, we have been paying roughly half that amount. This amount is recalculated each year by an independent firm that specializes in indirect cost analysis. These dollars cover the services, building maintenance, Human Resources, Finance, and Tax Collector that the County provides. The funds spent on this increase will come from proposed promotions.

Special Honors

Ms. Paolicelli asked that she be granted a few minutes to express her appreciation to the board for the time they devote to the promotion of tourism in Orange County. Jill McCullough, representing the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough is leaving the board due to a time conflict and Ms. Paolicelli thanked her for her service to Orange County Tourism. She presented her with resolution of appreciation.

Guest/host speakers

Ms. Paolicelli introduced Jessica Hurst, Sr. Account Manager and Tim McCraley of Simpleview whose web design firm is building the Visitors Bureaus new website. Ms. Hurst shared that Simpleview specializes in destination marketing, serving 380 destinations with a 95% retention rate. They will deliver quality, innovation and care through a dedicated team implementing twelve steps to a better website. It is their practice to include the client on every step for a unique site design. They shared a staged version of the site showing drop-downs, search area and weather making up a great visual site. Members of the board shared questions and comments. Meg McGurk asked about the events calendar, Laurie Paolicelli explained that events are the number one reason visitors visit our website followed by restaurants, towns, and regions. The website will utilize a map to facilitate these searches. A blog will be included in the website with blogs authored by many of Orange County's award winning authors including Daniel Wallace, Jill McCorkle and Michael Malone. These blogs will be featured every month with the authors writing about why they choose to live here. Mr. McCraley pointed to the fact that the site will be easily customizable. A social area will be included on the home page. Ms. Paolicelli reminded the board that the website includes a balanced representation across the county while maintaining the VisitChapelHill brand awareness and bringing the university closer to the front as the driver of our business. Chair Waldorf asked what the key search words would be for people visiting this site. Ms. Hurst replied that Simpleview employees an analyst to study the analytics of our webpage searches and reported that the most searched was "Carolina Basketball". Ms. Paolicelli stated that the launch date is scheduled for July 14, 2016. At Ms. Paolicelli's request Simpleview's representatives shared additional high resolution photographs with the board. Aaron Bachenheimer inquired about an inclusivity scan to see if we are representing our population and Nitin Khanna asked if we had included any pictures of Indian weddings to promote that market in the county. In conclusion Ms. Hurst informed the board that the website would be a responsive design in which the content is stacked so it renders to phones, tablets, computers or televisions.

Executive Directors Report

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director reported that a meeting was held with Conventions, Sports and Leisure, a feasibility company that is studying demand generators for the board to find what we need going forward in order not to cannibalize each other's business. Bill Krueger, who will be conducting the study for CSL will attend our next board meeting. There is sentiment in Orange County that we need sports fields to bring visitors rather than additional conference space. Ms. Paolicelli shared with the board that there is women who runs a LGBT comedy event who would like to share with the board her reasons for not bringing her event to North Carolina. After discussion of whether the board would find this helpful all decided it would be and Laurie will extend an invitation. In response to HB2 our ad agency has recommended that we use earned media to get out the word that we have always been at the forefront of social justice issues. They suggest a strong national campaign. Ms. Paolicelli included a resolution in the agenda packet for the board to approve regarding its position on HB2. After conversation about moving ahead with a vote on the resolution Penny Rich interjected that the county is involved with a bill coming through the legislature regarding the funding of the jail the county is planning to build in Hillsborough. The board agreed to put off our vote until that bill has been approved. Ms. Paolicelli provided all board members a copy of the annual strategic plan and stated that she would ask them to approve it at the next board meeting after the County passes the new budget.

Sales Report

Marlene Barbera reported that we would be using the services of a company called Plan B which will make phone calls on our behalf and will only ask us to pay for leads that they give us. Helen Hernandez from NATJA has recently been in town and met with Meg McGurk and representatives from the towns to begin planning what they would like the group to tour. She has been working with the Sheraton on contracts for their services. This planning will continue throughout the summer as NATJA will begin promoting the conference in August. She will be working to re-produce the initial video sent to NATJA to better suit their needs.

New Business/Roundtable

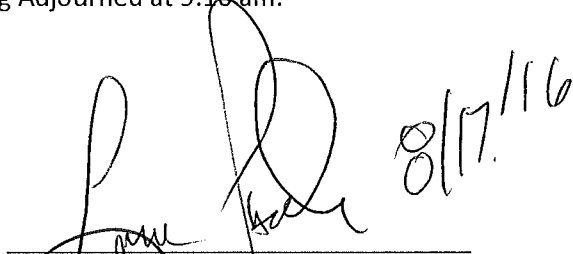
Chair Waldorf acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

Meg McGurk reported that the Downtown Partnership has placed additional pride flags on Franklin St. that represent other gender expressions and identities as well as flying the American Flag, all in our desire to show love and respect. As far as events there is Movies under the Stars at Wallace Plaza which draws a large crowd each week. Keenan Stadium will host the July 4th celebration with their fireworks display call by *Travel & Leisure*, one of the 10 best on the east coast.

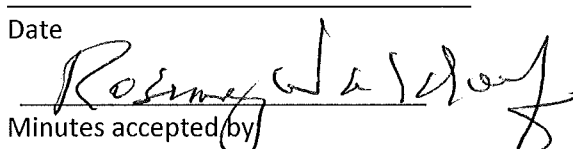
Our visitors Sarah DeGennaro, Executive Director and Michael Verville, Program Coordinator both of The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough reported that there will be Picnic in the Park at River Park to celebrate the 4th of July which will include food trucks, games and a reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Rosemary Waldorf followed up on the discussion at our previous meeting about encouraging UNC Healthcare to direct their patients towards staying in Orange County hotels. She has met with Mary Beck, formerly with UNC Healthcare and will meet with Janice McAdams of SECU House to become more informed on the subject before the meeting Ms. Paolicelli has coordinated with Karen McCall of UNC Healthcare. Ms. Paolicelli stated all are welcome at that meeting to be held on Friday, August 5 at the Carolina Inn.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:16 am.


Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date


Minutes accepted by
Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman


Date